



SESSION **3**

The last supper



MEETING AIM

To explore betrayal and forgiveness, and the symbolism of the last supper.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Mark 14:12-26



BACKGROUND

The writer tells us it was just before the Passover festival. This reference could easily be overlooked, but I love this (fully intended) metaphor from God. The Passover festival was integral to the Jewish calendar commemorating when God killed the firstborn of all the families in Egypt; all except the Israelite families, who had to paint their door frames with the blood of a firstborn lamb.

They wouldn't have known why that was significant at the time, but as the writer tells the story thousands of years later it would have become apparent for the first time. Can you imagine how they must have felt when they realised? This was an image of Jesus in the Old Testament! Suddenly they would have had to reread and rethink everything they knew. Everything about this story is so meticulously choreographed by God, right back to Moses.

As ever when using food, be aware of food hygiene and allergy issues.

+ GATHERING TIME



You will need: table(s); chairs; tablecloth; cutlery

Welcome the group and ask them to help you arrange the room around a large table. Set the table together so you can 'invite them to dinner'. Use a tablecloth, cutlery and a centrepiece (or whatever you can grab to make it look special). Doing a task like this together should give you all some time to catch up.

+ INTRO ACTIVITY 'STARTER'



You will need: bowl; pieces of bread; slips of paper; pen

Before the session, write the names of disciples on the slips of paper (enough names for one per person).

You can repeat names if you need to, but make sure you only have one Judas. Put a bowl in the centre of the table with pieces of bread in it. Make sure everyone knows who is opposite them. This is their partner.

Everyone takes a slip of paper and looks at the name at the same time. The person with Judas' name has to run around the circle, back to their seat, grab a piece of bread and eat it. If someone sees their partner leap up, they must do the same and try to beat them around the circle. The winner is the first to eat the bread and show you an empty mouth! Put all the slips back in the bowl and play again.

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION 'MAIN'



You will need: a ploughman's lunch style meal (including bread and grape juice); pens; paper

With everyone still around the table, share your meal out together. Try to do it as symbolically as possible, so don't allow lots of different conversations to run concurrently. Ensure that everybody is part of one conversation as they are eating.

At the beginning, ask about the meaning of bread and wine, and discuss their significance to the Church. Ask what the group's experience of Communion has been so far, and if doing it means something special to them personally.

It often feels special to us in church, but these two items would have been standard at Israelite meals. Jesus was a master at using relevant, understandable references and metaphors for his spiritual teaching.

Read Mark 14:12-26 as you share your meal. As you come to verses 22-25, act out the passage with the grape juice and bread. Consider together how the disciples might have felt. Would they have understood what was going on? Or would they have looked back afterwards and realised the significance?

+ CHATTING TOGETHER 'PUDDING'



You will need: a bowl of sweets or raisins

Pass the bowl round. As they take a sweet or raisin, they should choose one of the following questions to ask the group. Once the person thinks the question has been answered, they should pass the bowl on to the next person.

- What's your favourite part of the story?
- If you were one of the disciples, what would you think about Judas' actions?
- What do you think Jesus means when he calls the bread his body and the wine his blood?
- What does this story tell us about why Jesus came to live with his people?
- Do you know what happens next? Does knowing that help you to interpret what's happening here?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE 'WASHING UP'



You will need: plates from 'Bible exploration'; pens or soft pencils; bin or access to

washing-up facilities

If you used ceramic plates for the meal, give each person a plate and a soft pencil (which will wash off in warm, soapy water). If you used disposable plates, give out pens. Tell the young people to find some space on their own and write the names of people they have ever felt betrayed by in the past.

Next they should write their own name and think of times they have betrayed God by denying him, avoiding doing what he asked or putting other things before him in their lives.

Finally, they should wash up or throw away the plate to symbolise a new start, and ask for God's forgiveness and help. If they realise they have unforgiveness or bitterness towards people, they should pray about that or talk quietly to a leader.

+ PRAYER



The last supper was a time when the disciples had an incredible bond; a very intense time of brotherhood / sisterhood (including all the women present who weren't named as disciples). Make a symbolic gesture of praying in togetherness: tightly in a circle with left hands on the next person's shoulder and right hands all on top of each other in the middle. Suggest they all shout a loud "Huh!" cry, like American football teams tend to do, after each prayer. Go around the circle, with each person saying a prayer statement such as: "You forgive me when I betray you by losing my cool when I play football."